

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

23 OCTOBER, 1893 TO 16 MAY, 1894,

WITH

Communications

MADE TO THE SOCIETY.

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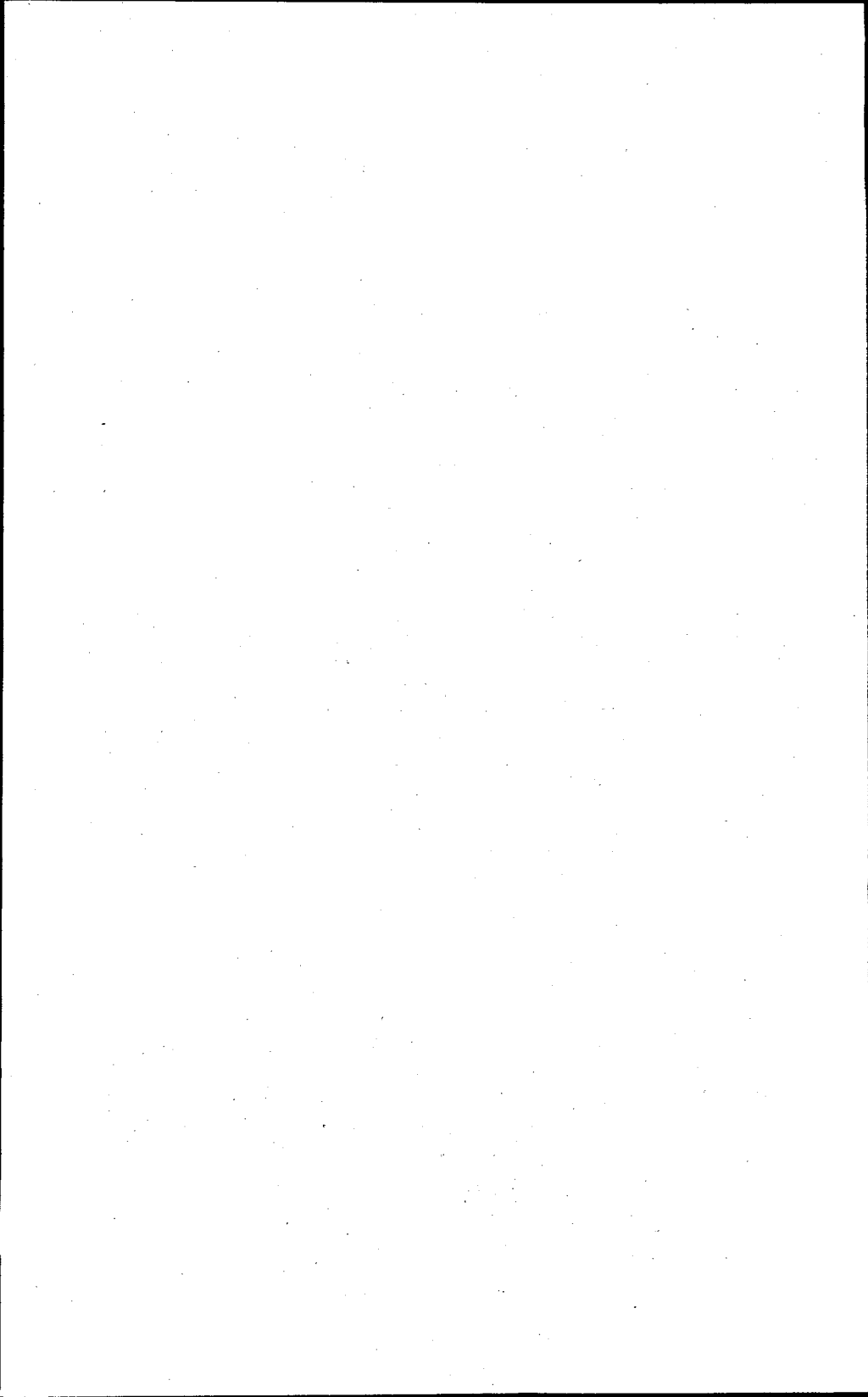
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CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
PROCEEDINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS.

STATE OF TEXAS,

COUNTY OF _____

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VOL. VIII.



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VOL. II.

1891—1894.

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The Rev. C. L. ACLAND, M.A., Jesus College, made the following communication, in illustration of which many interesting objects were exhibited :

THE ANTIQUITIES OF THE IMMEDIATE PAST.

For some years past I have been interested in observing, and, so far as I have had opportunity, in collecting specimens of things which were of everyday use in the times of our fathers and grandfathers, but which are now no longer seen, or, if found in use at all, found only in remote spots which have as yet to some extent escaped the flood of change which in recent years has poured over our country. I have thought that it might be interesting to speak for a short time this evening upon this subject, illustrating my remarks with such objects as I have here, most of which have been collected by me in Shetland. I have known Shetland now for 25 years, and see that, remote as these islands are, they are now rapidly changing, so that in a few more years probably many of the things I shew you will be far more difficult to get than they now are. This difficulty will arise not from any design, but simply because objects of common use, when supplanted by more recent inventions, are just thrown aside and in a short time lost. Still there are many things yet in common use in Shetland, and doubtless in many other parts of Great Britain, which nearer the centres of civilization have passed entirely out of sight.

Take the Spinning Wheel for an example. It is still in use in every cottage in Shetland; if it were not, the exquisitely soft and fine knitting which is characteristic of the woollen produce of the Islands would have already passed away. No machine-twisted yarn could possibly give the result. The wool is hand-carded, hand-spun, and hand-knit. But elsewhere the spinning wheel has gone out of use. So completely has ignorance in this matter replaced knowledge that among the pictures on the walls of the Royal Academy a few years back I counted eight in which the spinning wheel was supposed to be shewn, in seven of which the wheel was simply an impossibility. On the same day I saw in a shop window in Piccadilly the photo-

graph of a popular actress seated at a spinning wheel. The wheel in this case was a possible wheel, but the manner in which she was represented as using it was impossible, the carded wool was all twisted round the edge of the wheel.

The Rivlins, or shoes made of raw hide with hair outward, are still to be seen on many feet in Shetland, especially in the outer islands and more remote parts of the mainland, where they form the ordinary foot-covering of the majority of the population. They are admirably adapted for the rough swampy hills and valleys of the country, but less suited to the made roads of the more accessible parts. Such as they are, however, they are rapidly disappearing, their place being taken by india-rubber goloshes.

The Lamp Buckie, or large whelk shell, till lately used by the fishermen of Fethaland as a lamp in which fish oil was burnt, is now, I suspect, quite extinct. The Collie, however, or Iron Lamp, may still be found here and there. I have seen it in use in Fetlar, but it has almost vanished before the cheap, and certainly far more efficient, paraffin lamp, and that has happened in its case which I spoke of just now. It has been cast aside, and is now very difficult to get. One well known antiquary of my acquaintance was obliged to be contented with a modern copy of an old example. Yet fifty years ago this lamp was almost universal in Shetland and probably in many other parts of Great Britain, and in the early part of the present century was well known throughout Scotland as the Cruisie.

I do not know that the spindle and whorl are now used in Shetland, but an old woman in South Yell with whom I used to have many a chat over past times well remembered them, but the whorl was "just a tautie" (potato).

My object in bringing this matter before you to-night is to induce some of you if possible to take an interest in these antiquities of the immediate past before it is too late. They represent a condition of things which should come close home to us as that which obtained among our immediate progenitors. A valuable and historically instructive collection might be got together if some members of our Society would hunt up the corners of our own country. I have no doubt that much that

would go towards such a collection might be found without going out of Cambridgeshire. Since I have had this paper on hand I have come across what I have long searched for in vain: a Rushlight Shade, pierced with the round holes that used to cause bright spots on the wall when I was a child, and, as I well remember, set me wondering as to how they came there.

If you would see the whole subject most attractively treated, get hold of "The Past in the Present¹," a series of lectures by Dr Mitchell, in which many of the things now before you are figured. If the book has the same absorbing interest for you that it has had for me you will thank me for the introduction.

I will now run over the various objects before you, making such remarks as may suggest themselves, and I shall be very glad to answer any questions about them to the best of my power. Among the objects exhibited the following are perhaps the most noteworthy:

The spinning wheel with its accompaniments, cards, sweerie, and reel. Kembs for carding wool², now quite out of use, and very rarely to be met with. Several specimens of Shetland wool and knitting.

Model of the Seixern, the old Shetland fishing boat, made to scale by a fisherman at Copister in South Yell.

Lamp Buckie and several Collies.

Agricultural Implements. Spade, Long-handled Scythe, Sickle, and Peat Knife.

Baskets made of the stalks of Dock-plants.

The Quern, still frequently used in Shetland.

Rivlins.

Tinder Box with Flint and Steel.

Sheep Bells.

Rushlight Stand.

¹ "The Past in the Present; what is Civilisation?" *Rhind Lectures* 1876, 1878. Douglas, Edinburgh.

² See illustration on page 48 of *Textile Fabrics*, by Dr Rock. South Kensington Art Handbooks. The Spinning wheel shewn on the same page was in use in Suffolk within the memory of many now living, but I have not been able to get one. Perhaps some members of our Society may be more fortunate.

Baron A. von HÜGEL compared some of the exhibits from Shetland and other places with articles in the South Sea Islands.

Professor CLARK remarked that Mr Acland's statement that the wool was *pulled* from lambs in Shetland for the finest weaving, instead of *shorn*, explained the passage in Marlow :

“A gown made of the finest wool
“Which from the pretty lambs we pull,”

which he had always regarded as a poetical license.

Mr W. BELL said that lamps very much like those exhibited were still used by bakers.

A visitor remembered that many years ago it had been the custom in Cambridge for the bargees on the Cam to dress themselves entirely in straw on Plough Monday and to parade the town dancing, until they had collected enough money to get drunk with. They were always called “Straw-men,” and their dress resembled that from Iceland (?) exhibited this evening, and which Baron von Hügel had said was like those seen in the South Seas.

The PRESIDENT suggested that an exhibition of primitive agricultural implements like those exhibited would make an interesting feature in the forthcoming Royal Agricultural Show.

MONDAY, *February 12th*, 1894.

F. J. H. JENKINSON, M.A., President, in the chair.

Professor HUGHES and Professor MACALISTER made the following communication :

ON A NEWLY DISCOVERED DYKE AT CHERRY HINTON.

In May, 1893, Mr Crawley informed us that various remains had been discovered in digging the new pit which he was opening on the north side of the reservoir above the great chalk quarry at Cherry Hinton. When making a road to this new pit, in the cutting, about twenty yards east of the road, above the large quarry, he crossed the end of a grave, in which lay a skeleton with the head to the north, and beside it an

CONTENTS

OF PROCEEDINGS, No. XXXVI.

VOL. VIII. (NEW SERIES, VOL. II.) No. III.

	PAGE
On an Etruscan inscription at Perugia. By Professor CLARK	253
On some ancient ditches and medieval remains found in the course of recent excavations near the Pitt Press. By Professor HUGHES	255
On the assessments of Cambridgeshire, 1291—1889. By Rev. J. B. PEARSON, D.D.	283
On objects of antiquarian interest dug up in Trinity College. By W. WHITE, Esq.	292
Exhibition of a Welsh wooden half-penny. By Professor HUGHES	300
Revised Laws of the Society	301
On some twelfth century charters of the Priory of S. Radegund, Cambridge. By A. GRAY, M.A.	304
On the antiquities of the immediate past. By Rev. C. L. ACLAND, M.A.	314
On a newly discovered dyke at Cherryhinton. By Professor HUGHES, Professor MACALISTER, and W. H. L. DUCKWORTH, B.A.	317
On a British jar found at Haslingfield. By Professor CLARK	331
On a MS. kept by John Duckworth of S. John's College, about 1670. By G. C. M. SMITH, M.A.	333
On monuments to Cambridge men in the University of Padua. By Professor DARWIN	337
On the first and other early Cambridge Newspapers. By R. BOWES, Esq.	347
On ancient Libraries: (1) Christ Church, Carterbury; (2) Citeaux, Clairvaux; (3) Zutphen, Enkhuizen. By J. W. CLARK, M.A.	359
Report of the Society for 1893—94	389
Exhibition, with description, of a crystal wyvern, and an English ring dial. By Professor HUGHES	390
List of presents received during the year ending 16 May, 1894	393
Treasurer's report for the year ending 31 December, 1893	399
List of Council, elected 16 May, 1894	400
Index	401